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ABSTRACT

This report describes various aspects of interaction between Japanese and Americans in the suburban school systems of the New York metropolitan region. Since the late 1980s the number of children of Japanese nationals attending schools in the New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut suburbs surrounding New York City has grown to nearly 5,000. This study discusses the challenges encountered by the Japanese families upon entering area school systems, and offers recommendations to enhance the intercultural contact between Japanese and U.S. nationals. The report is divided into five sections. Section 1 is the "Introduction." Section 2, "Background," contains: (1) "Growth and Change in the Japanese Community in the New York Metropolitan Area"; and (2) "The School System in its Cultural Context." Section 3, "Schooling in America," includes: (1) "Specialized Schools Established by the Japanese Community"; and (2) "Japanese Children in American Public Schools." Section 4 is entitled "The Challenge of Returning Home for the Japanese Child." Section 5 offers "Recommendations and Considerations." (EH)

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ED 390 719

JAPANESE NATIONALS IN AMERICAN SCHOOLS IN THE NEW YORK METROPOLITAN REGION

A report sponsored by

The National Project on Japan and Asia in American Schools

Columbia University

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PREFACE

The presence of Japanese families in our schools and communities provides a valuable opportunity to improve the knowledge that Japanese and Americans have about one another. It is hoped that this report on the experience of school districts in the New York metropolitan area will provide a basis for dialogue and exchange among school districts throughout the country -- both among those that host Japanese students, in states such as Washington, Tennessee, and Michigan, and among those that support strong programming and interest in the Japanese language and culture.

Information for this report was gathered through a series of site visits to selected schools in the New York metropolitan tri-state area (New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut). We would like to thank the schools contacted for their cooperation.

This report was prepared by Victoria Lyon-Bestor and Linda S. Wojtan in conjunction with the National Project on Japan and Asia in American Schools. This five-year project is designed to promote and enrich education about Japan and Asia in American schools. Ninette Enrique very ably coordinated the production and dissemination of the final report. Support for the project is provided by the Japan Foundation Center for Global Partnership and the United States Department of Education through the East Asia National Resource Center at Columbia University.

We welcome comments and suggestions for further research and discussion on this topic.

Roberta Martin
Project Director

I. INTRODUCTION

Over the last two decades the number of Japanese families residing in the United States for periods ranging from two to ten years has dramatically increased. The growth of the Japanese community in the New York metropolitan region has been particularly notable: by 1990 the largest concentration of Japanese nationals in the country could be found in the suburban towns surrounding New York City. The phenomenon of Japanese nationals taking up temporary residence in the United States is clearly related to increased economic and diplomatic ties between the two countries. Many Japanese firms have U.S. subsidiaries and a growing number have manufacturing facilities in the United States. While large plants and production facilities tend to be in the heartland of the United States where land is readily available, most Japanese firms maintain executive offices in or around New York City. In the New York metropolitan region, the population of Japanese nationals is composed largely of corporate executives and staff personnel, consular officials, United Nations personnel, members of an expanding Japanese services industry, and their accompanying family members.

The school system provides the primary context for interaction between many Japanese families and the American families in their host communities. Classroom work, extracurricular clubs, language classes, Parent-Teacher Associations, and school-related travel programs are just a few of the activities that bring Japanese and American families together. It is in these settings that Japanese and Americans have the rare opportunity to get to know one another and learn about each other's culture on a first-hand basis. Furthermore, these families can form ties over several years' time that can, in turn, lay the basis for ongoing communication and enduring relationships between communities in both countries. It may be said that such interchange has a significant role to play in the strengthening of relations between Japan and the United States.

The purpose of this report is to describe various aspects of the interaction between Japanese and Americans in the suburban school systems of the New York metropolitan region. The sharing of this experience, both the successes and the disappointments, will hopefully provide insights on which to build and deepen understanding between the United States and Japan.

II. BACKGROUND

A. GROWTH AND CHANGE IN THE JAPANESE COMMUNITY IN THE NEW YORK METROPOLITAN AREA

Nationally over 95 percent of the children of Japanese nationals residing in the U.S. attend American schools, the vast majority in suburban public schools. Since the late 1980s the number of such children in the New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut suburbs surrounding New York City (hereafter, the tri-state area) has grown to nearly 5,000.

Japanese families tend to congregate in towns that have excellent public schools and good public transportation, and that are within relatively easy commuting distance to New York City or other regional corporate centers such as Greenwich, Connecticut, or the corporate belt stretching across central New Jersey. In some of these communities, the number of Japanese children in the school system has increased, since the mid-1980s, to 20 or 30 percent of the school population. [1]

Demographically, the Japanese population in the tri-state area has changed significantly, apart from its dramatic growth in size. The profile of these temporary residents, or Japanese sojourners, is now younger, not necessarily in upper management, and generally more knowledgeable about the United States than were earlier counterparts. Likewise, the family of today's sojourner is also younger, the children generally at elementary or middle school age.

The average age of today's sojourner ranges from the late-thirties to mid-forties, an almost ten-year drop from the average age of their predecessors (late-forties to early-fifties). Many Japanese comment that twenty years ago those who came were the most cosmopolitan members of a highly educated elite, here to gain the requisite foreign experience for an upper-management position in leading firms or government ministries. With the vast expansion of Japanese firms abroad during the 1970s, and particularly during the boom years of the mid to late 1980s, the number of employees sent abroad has mushroomed and includes not only elite-track employees but persons from a variety of educational and occupational backgrounds.

Furthermore, unlike those who came in earlier decades, many Japanese sent to the United States in the past few years have generally had no previous experience living abroad. Some come feeling ill-prepared for or ambivalent about the long stay away from home and extended family; some mark time until they can return to Japan. On the other hand, others are relaxed and eager to take advantage of their overseas experience. Particularly since there is a plethora of print and media materials available in Japan on the United States, these adventurous sojourners come well-read and, in addition, heavily armed with popular publications that will make the initiation into their host country easier.

The children of today's sojourners are generally younger than those of earlier decades.

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[1] During the last two decades a number of areas have become magnets for Japanese families and have grown in population density through the mid-1980s. These include: the village of Scarsdale in Westchester County, New York; Fort Lee, New Jersey, near the George Washington Bridge; several communities on the North Shore of Long Island; and Fairfield County, especially Greenwich, in southwestern Connecticut. In recent years Japanese families have tended to spread out into areas surrounding those communities and are now found in heavier concentrations in Connecticut and in the areas surrounding Harrison, Rye, and Purchase in Westchester County, where Japanese schools have been established.

Thus the choices their parents make in regard to their education are different from those made by their predecessors. For example, since the children of earlier sojourners were already at the age of intense competition and preparation for examinations, families often had to face being separated so as not to sacrifice their educational opportunities. Frequently the father came to the United States alone, leaving his children in Japan with relatives or in school dormitories and his wife to commute between the two countries. The separation of families is not so common today. Recently, many of the Japanese children coming to the United States are at the elementary level, and although some of the older children still return to Japan for junior high or high school, there are now Japanese high schools in the United States to accommodate them.

B. THE SCHOOL SYSTEM IN ITS CULTURAL CONTEXT

School is not only a place of learning but a place where culture is imparted, social relationships are fostered, and ties between community and family are created. These functions have significant impact on the relations between American and Japanese families and their respective needs.

For Americans, the public school system has traditionally been the vehicle by which immigrants are assimilated into the mainstream of American society. In the past, such assimilation has often required immigrants to change their native habits and behavior to accommodate customs considered to be "typically American."

Unlike most other groups coming to the United States, the majority of Japanese nationals are not immigrants but temporary residents, sent here by their employers on work assignments ranging from two to ten years in length. Since these Japanese do not necessarily seek assimilation, they present a particular dilemma to American teachers who are used to encouraging "American" behavior from their foreign students. Despite the fact that American families have resided in countries around the world as part of the military, diplomatic, or business community, and have set up their own enclaves of American schools, homes and stores with no intention of assimilating into the local society, many Americans are disturbed by this phenomenon occurring on their own soil.

Moreover, since the presence of a large number of sojourning foreign nationals in an American school system is a relatively new phenomenon, schools are not always prepared to take full advantage of the experience. Many high school districts throughout the United States promote student exchanges with Japan and are introducing Japanese language instruction; surprisingly, however, districts in the New York metropolitan area with large populations of Japanese nationals generally are not. While school systems with large numbers of Japanese nationals are making adjustments in their English as a second language (ESL) programs and other educational services to accommodate Japanese students, many of these districts have not yet developed parallel programs, such as the introduction of the Japanese language, that would allow American students to build on the opportunities afforded by the

presence of their Japanese schoolmates.

For Japanese, having their children educated in a foreign country and in a foreign school system is a relatively new experience. Prior to the 1970s, few Japanese families were sent abroad, but with the growth of international business relations over the past decade, many Japanese families have been relocated overseas for extended stays. Whether or not to educate their children in foreign schools is a decision confronting many Japanese parents overseas today.

What makes this decision so difficult is the formidable nature of Japan's educational system, a highly competitive national system with a uniform curriculum that relies upon examinations to place students in schools at each level of the educational ladder. Removing a child from the system for any length of time can seriously disrupt if not completely derail a child's progress. Japanese parents must often choose among several alternatives: coming as a family and sending their children to American schools; bringing their children but placing them in Japanese schools where the course of study matches, as much as possible, that in Japan; or leaving their children in Japan to live with relatives or in school dormitories, with the least possible disruption to their course of study. The choice is a difficult one.

Even if they decide to send their children to American schools, many parents hesitate to encourage them to pursue opportunities presented during their time in school. In fact, it is not unusual for Japanese parents to sanction their children's involvement in Japanese cliques and to discourage them from becoming heavily involved in school or community life beyond the level of simple class participation. The specter of what is known as *kikoku shijo mondai* (the problems of returnee children) looms large in the minds of Japanese parents and children alike from their day of arrival. These problems often include discrimination, isolation, tracking, and bullying by Japanese classmates once the children return to their schools in Japan. Thus the question of how much to allow their children to be assimilated into American school culture is a very real dilemma for Japanese parents.

Further, in order to keep up with the curriculum in Japan, Japanese children often attend "Saturday school" on weekends or *juku* (after-school lessons focused on the Japanese curriculum with an eye to exam preparation) during the week, thus seriously limiting their time for other activities. Even if they wished to attend after-school events, Saturday football games, or other sports activities, Japanese children frequently find that their supplementary school work, so important to their educational and ultimately their career options in Japan, does not allow them ample opportunity to socialize with their American friends.

Japanese mothers may also experience difficulties in adjusting to the U.S. school environment. In Japan, mothers are accustomed to taking a leading and very participatory role in their children's education, a role that has earned them the appellation *kyoiku mama* (education mama). With their children in U.S. schools, however, Japanese mothers often cannot communicate well enough in English to feel fully involved with their children's school life. In addition, many lack a clear understanding of the sometimes vast differences between

the Japanese and American educational systems.

It is evident that understanding these differences in the way that Americans and Japanese view the school system is key to creating a successful bi-cultural experience. For example, knowing that the Japanese children will return to Japan and be expected to behave according to the norms of that country, American teachers have asked themselves whether making these children "do it the American way" is in the children's best interests. Teachers report that this has led to a healthy reflection on which rules of conduct are essential to the smooth functioning of the classroom and which are simply a matter of habit or cultural preference. Likewise, administrators of the Saturday schools acknowledge that Japanese children need more time with their American peers and attempt to accommodate the multiple demands on the children.

III. SCHOOLING IN AMERICA

Japanese parents in the tri-state area have two main options for educating their children in the United States: A) specialized schools established by the Japanese community and B) American public schools. Since the latter concerns itself with the interaction between Japanese families and their American host communities, particular attention has been paid here to detailing this experience, to recounting its successes and frustrations, for the benefit of other communities in the United States that are facing similar challenges.

A. SPECIALIZED SCHOOLS ESTABLISHED BY THE JAPANESE COMMUNITY

The growing Japanese population has created the need for an expanded system of Japanese schooling in the United States. For some time there has been a system of Japanese Saturday schools throughout the tri-state area. These schools, supervised by the Japanese Ministry of Education, offer a course of study that follows the standard Japanese curriculum to help children keep up with their classrooms back home and to aid their transition upon return. The curriculum varies somewhat according to age but includes Japanese language and history, mathematics, and science. Saturday school classes are generally held in local elementary schools in space rented from the districts for the day. While the percentage varies somewhat from district to district, current statistics indicate that approximately 80 percent of Japanese students in U.S. schools also attend Saturday schools.

In addition to the Saturday schools, there are two full-time Japanese schools in the New York metropolitan area. In 1975 a full-time Japanese school was established in Flushing Meadows, Queens. By the late 1980s the Flushing Meadows facility had become too small and in 1988 the school purchased the facilities of Daycroft School in Greenwich, Connecticut, where there was a relatively large concentration of Japanese nationals. Almost immediately the Japanese school plan encountered strong and unexpected opposition from the local community which cited potential problems, including traffic congestion from buses bringing

students from throughout the tri-state area. But after meeting with community leaders and delaying the move by one year, during which time the school occupied temporary quarters in Yonkers, the new facility opened in September 1992. Known as The Greenwich Japanese School, it now has 409 day students in the 4th through 9th grades.

In 1990, Keio High School opened on the campus of Manhattanville College in Westchester County. Students who graduate from the program at a certain level of performance may enter Keio University in Tokyo directly or are expected to be competitive in applying to other elite institutions. The school is open to day students as well as boarders and is fully enrolled, with approximately 400 students in grades 9 through 12.

Together these institutions provide an excellent range of options to Japanese families in the tri-state area, making it possible for families to stay together in the United States without major risk to their children's reentry into the Japanese school system.

B. JAPANESE CHILDREN IN AMERICAN SCHOOLS

1. ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (ESL) PROGRAMS: THE FIRST INTRODUCTION TO AN AMERICAN SCHOOL

The English as a second language (ESL) class is the first experience in American schools for most Japanese children and their families. Thus the ESL teachers and resource-room aides are frequently the first to address the full range of problems, questions, concerns, and adjustments that each Japanese student experiences in the transition period.

The ESL faculty faces a range of problems, problems that often reflect those in the larger ongoing debate about the best strategies for teaching English as a second language: strategies for the evaluation of language ability and placement; concerns about when and how soon to mainstream ESL students into the regular classroom; debates over whether to offer transitional classes between the ESL and regular class, particularly in more difficult subjects, such as math or science, or in those that involve a great deal of reading, such as social studies and literature. Other issues include methods of performance evaluation and the pros and cons of grading; the appropriate ratio of pure language instruction versus content instruction in ESL and transitional classes; and the inter-relationships of ESL and regular classroom faculty and school departments.

A number of communities in the New York metropolitan area have developed outstanding ESL programs. Some of these special programs include the use of: student tutors; a variety of special advising options available in ESL resource rooms; Japanese mothers as volunteers; and computers in teaching English.

One of the most varied ESL programs is that of a district on the North Shore of Long Island. Japanese nationals make up over 50 percent of the district's ESL population of 220

students. ESL is taught in three strands: language acquisition, context understanding, and reading and writing. Incoming students may take ESL courses for twenty months prior to taking the Placement in English Proficiency (PEP) test; reportedly this district has the highest success rate on the PEP test in New York State. In addition to its full-time staff of professional ESL teachers, the program has four teaching assistants, an honors peer volunteer program, and numerous volunteers, including a group of four Japanese mothers who provide help in both ESL classes and broader Japanese student-related matters. One of that group's current projects is the creation of a Japanese language "Referral Services Booklet" to help newcomers and longer term residents.

ESL is taught at all levels in this district. There is a very active resource room that provides counseling, peer tutoring, referrals, and related activities. In addition, the district has expanded the scope of its ESL program to include several transitional courses in history, mathematics, and science, which offer instruction at a pace between that of the ESL and the regular classroom in order to ease ESL students into the mainstream.

Another excellent ESL program is offered by a school system in Westchester County, and serves as a model throughout the region. In this district Japanese youngsters account for 80 percent of the ESL population. While state-mandated rules stipulate that any district with more than 20 percent of a given language population may qualify for bilingual instruction, no such program exists in this district because of the opposition of Japanese parents to bilingual instruction. This opposition reflects parents' fears of: a) the further marginalization and isolation of their children; b) the proliferation of cliques among Japanese children; c) limiting their children's international experience; and d) their children learning neither English nor Japanese well.

Special features of this ESL program include efforts to create a sense of class identity and to avoid the perception that ESL classes are merely transitional, peripheral classes out of which students should move out as quickly as possible. The district endeavors to bring ESL students together in a "home room" type setting, in addition to their normal ESL periods. While ESL students in the district do indeed progress in substantive courses as quickly as students in other districts, these additional efforts to augment the ESL experience have contributed to a better introduction to American school life.

ESL teachers in this district have been especially successful in finding ways to help Japanese students feel confident in making classroom presentations and joining club activities. These teachers realize the rich potential not only among the Japanese but among all students that make up the international student body. It should perhaps be noted that all ESL students experience two rather distinct worlds, one in the ESL setting and the other in the general school setting. Key to the success of any ESL and school-wide effort is the extent to which foreign students become part of the larger student body. It is clear that more than English language skills are needed to facilitate this all-important transition.

When called for, special provisions are made for the needs of students enrolled in a

combination of ESL and regular classes. For those with limited English proficiency, flexible testing schedules are often arranged and the assistance of resource-room assistants and volunteers is provided. Moreover, districts have experimented with a range of transitional programs to facilitate the move into more challenging courses such as math or science, particularly in the upper grades.

As part of its ESL program, a district in Connecticut has introduced a new element worthy of note, namely, the use of computers in English language instruction, networked to provide interaction between students and teachers. In addition, the district aggressively uses language lab facilities for interactive spelling instruction and is experimenting with various new methods of computerized instruction.

2) INTEGRATING THE JAPANESE COMMUNITY INTO THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

There are numerous overlapping issues centering on the orientation of Japanese families and the promotion of their greater involvement in school and community life. For example, districts must address tensions that may arise among Japanese sojourners, immigrants from other countries, and local American residents. Additionally, difficulty with the English language can limit the participation of Japanese parents in the school community.

For Japanese children, the involvement and active interest of their parents are important elements in a successful school experience. Despite obstacles such as those posed by language or a mother not having a driver's license, a number of useful activities and programs have been attempted.

By way of introduction to the school district, one Westchester County school system provides a one week day camp at the end of the summer to acquaint students with the school and the American educational system. It also offers a simultaneous companion program for mothers, who may attend with their pre-school-age children, to acquaint them with the system, answer questions, and bring them into the school community. Throughout the year the district also holds periodic lunchtime meetings to keep mothers involved and up-to-date on school activities.

One district in northern New Jersey has addressed the problem of differences in the Japanese and American school calendar year by encouraging Japanese companies to accommodate the U.S. schedule by arranging transfers during the summer, rather than in March or April, at the end of the Japanese fiscal and school year as had been customary. That district now offers new arrivals an intensive summer orientation program.

Several other school systems offer orientation programs to newly arrived Japanese nationals in the summer. These programs vary in format from a series of several meetings to a full week of day camp-type activities. Whatever the format, the emphasis is on a low-key,

low-stress, informal atmosphere in which students and parents can feel comfortable asking all types of questions.

Among Japanese families some fathers tend to have better English skills than mothers. Nevertheless, it is the mothers who are still largely responsible for their children's school career. Schools therefore have made communication a high priority. Almost every school and/or school system in the tri-state area that has a sizable Japanese population has prepared a handbook in the Japanese language. Additionally, many communities make use of informal liaisons between the Japanese community and the schools. Often these are Japanese nationals who have lived in the United States for a longer period and are fluent in English or, in some cases, United States citizens who have lived in Japan and are fluent in both languages.

All schools with large numbers of Japanese nationals have special outreach programs to the Japanese communities in their area. The format and nature of the activities varies widely. In some cases it is a Japanese mothers' club, in others it is a fathers' club. In yet other settings, a seat on the board of the PTA is reserved for a Japanese national. Several schools report that involving Japanese mothers is sometimes a challenge. Although they are invariably willing to contribute by making or buying something, the mothers often prefer playing a more limited role and feel more secure about undertakings at which they know that they will succeed. Thus some schools have noted that they have to "strongly invite" the Japanese mothers in order to gain their participation.

In one school a series of special seminars for Japanese parents was created to help make them more conversant with standard educational parlance. These seminars included topics such as thinking skills and alternative assessment. Another school offered special noontime seminars, open to both mothers and fathers, that featured informal conversations and questions and answers about often puzzling aspects of school life including report cards, summer activities, and the nature of parent-teacher conferences. This series also included a "field trip" to the local library so that parents could take advantage of the wealth of resources and programs available to the whole family.

Other schools have attempted to link outreach to the Japanese community with the integration of these parents into the community at large. One scheme featured a mix of early morning coffees (designed to attract both mothers and fathers) that included a Japanese specific group, an international families meeting, and a series of grade-level gatherings open to the school community at large. Yet another attempt to enhance communication and understanding featured a video presentation of an informal roundtable discussion between several Japanese mothers and the principal to elucidate differences between the U.S. and Japanese systems. (For example, in contrast to practices in Japan, in U.S. schools running in the halls is not permitted, and homework is an important element in determining grades.) This video has proven a useful orientation resource for Japanese parents just arriving in the community.

At times interaction among families in the area is promoted on a community-wide basis.

One school district has established a social organization for international families. In another area, the local *juku* prepares, updates, and distributes a listing of Japanese families to facilitate interaction.

All schools reported that Japanese parents were generally willing to contribute some amount of time and effort. In some schools mothers who live near the school might substitute for teachers who are delayed or ill, or they may provide enrichment classes in Japanese culture. Similarly, in several schools mothers volunteer as teaching assistants, especially in ESL classes. In addition, parents sometimes arrange events to show their appreciation for the special programs and extra attention that American teachers give their children. In one New Jersey district the Japanese community prepares an elaborate buffet luncheon at the end of the school year for all administrators, ESL teachers, and staff members who work primarily with Japanese nationals. In a Connecticut school setting, Japanese mothers prepare a bountiful Japanese breakfast buffet in February as a special treat for all teachers (and as an effort to help dispel the winter blues).

Several schools commented that Japanese corporations seem to be urging their employees to take part in community activities and socialize with non-Japanese. Corporations are aware of the burden that large numbers of non-English speaking students place on the school system, and of the resentment that this might engender. For example, since most Japanese families rent, rather than own, their places of residence, they are sometimes accused of not bearing their share of local taxes from which school funding is generally derived. This is, however, rather a red herring since taxes are generally passed along to tenants as part of the monthly rent. Nonetheless, Japanese have taken steps to address such concerns by making special donations to schools and other community efforts.

One New Jersey district is a model of parental activity among the Japanese families. To date the Japanese parents' group has published a survey of attitudes within the district, and has worked to create support programs for the schools and the communities. Administrators in another district commented on the recent growth and formalization of the Japanese parents' network. Formerly, the group was largely ad hoc and very informal, consisting almost entirely of mothers; now it is more formally organized and dominated by fathers. Local school administrators seemed surprised and disappointed that Japanese mothers who formerly had been quite active had all but retired from the group.

3) ISSUES INVOLVING SCHOOL LIFE

The integration of Japanese children into "school life" and the extent to which they interact with students other than fellow Japanese are matters of concern to teachers, parents, and administrators. The data gathered reflect changes that have occurred in several districts.

Due to the large influx of Japanese sojourners over the past several years, more districts are witnessing the formation of Japanese cliques in their schools and the attendant problems

of stereotyping and prejudice on the part of the larger student body. A number of districts indicated that, previously, when there were few Japanese children, incoming students were obliged to acclimate quickly. Currently, however, there are large numbers of Japanese children in these districts; forming a critical mass and feeling secure with each other, they sometimes prefer to remain within their own groups.

This seems most pronounced in areas where Japanese account for 20 percent or more of the school population. In such instances, the minority group members tend not to change or assimilate very readily and the majority culture must make some concessions. Conversely, where the minority group is relatively small, its members feel the need to assimilate as quickly as possible. This phenomenon has been referred to as "tipping."

Although the issue of Japanese cliques was frequently raised, there was a difference of opinion as to how it should be evaluated. Several teachers noted that it was only natural for children to seek others who could speak their language, especially at the elementary level. Others pointed out that the level of socialization of a first-grader must be expected to differ from that of a sixth-grader in a middle school setting where socialization and interaction skills are fostered in the curriculum.

Many Japanese children who have been in the U.S. education system for a number of years and reach middle school either switch to a Japanese school in the United States or return home. Consequently, a large percentage of Japanese students in U.S. high schools are relatively recent arrivals. Thus while Japanese and American children may attend elementary school together from kindergarten in a given district, it is not the same children who continue on to high school together. New friendships must be formed at the high school level. Therefore, high schools face as difficult a problem in accommodating newcomers, though in somewhat smaller numbers than elementary schools. However, given the greater independence of high school students both emotionally and socially, the problems they encounter are often of a more personal nature and more complex than the problems of elementary students.

To provide further cultural outreach and inreach, some districts have made efforts to establish mentoring relationships among students. At least one school is attempting a tutoring system whereby Japanese students assist Americans studying Japanese as a foreign language. Although this attempt holds much promise it is, of course, limited to the small minority of schools that teach the Japanese language. Another attempt involves pairing new Japanese students with both a Japanese and an American "big brother" or "sister" upon arrival. Other activities involve different pairings and clusterings of Japanese and American students in order to increase interactions among them. Many programs are limited by the busy schedules of the students both in and out of school. As a result, it seems that many American and Japanese students seem to be having parallel experiences that do not necessarily involve interaction. In order to address this situation, and to ensure that both Japanese and American students take full advantage of the opportunities for interaction, it is necessary to introduce specially designed programs that promote more sustained contact and facilitate the

development of deeper bonds.

Pairing local students with newly arrived foreign nationals through a kind of "buddy" system has proven somewhat successful, at least during the initial, most critical stage. One such effort included a "buddy" club featuring a number of activities considered to be "typically American." For example, there was a barbecue at the start of the school year and pumpkin carving later in the fall. Although well attended at the start of the school year, interest in such club activities had diminished by the winter months.

Several districts are placing the integration of Japanese nationals in the context of the larger multicultural challenge of prejudice reduction throughout the school system. Rather than focusing specifically on interaction between American and Japanese students, such efforts encourage all students, teachers, and administrators to take part in ongoing multicultural training programs focused on acceptance of diversity.

There is a need for innovative approaches to the integration of Japanese nationals particularly in view of the expectations placed upon them when they return to Japan. Back home they will be expected to have "kept up" with the Japanese curriculum, including its rigorous demands of Japanese language training, as well as to have learned to speak English well, and in a broad sense, to have become "internationalized." Most students therefore must attend *juku* or work with private tutors on weekday afternoons as well as go to Saturday school. In addition, some have tutors who may take the place of *juku*. Many Japanese children are thus cut off from traditional venues for socialization including extracurricular and after-school activities, and weekend outings with young people in the neighborhood. At least one educator mentioned that while she encouraged Japanese parents to send their children to summer camp as a vehicle for socialization, the parents often insisted on sending their children to a camp in the United States featuring Japanese language for Japanese nationals. She lamented the loss of this ideal opportunity for interaction with American students.

Another burden awaits the Japanese child who has somewhat mastered the English language and taken on American mannerisms: this is the scrutiny and perhaps ridicule of his/her Japanese classmates in this country. It is generally considered undesirable to appear to be too "Americanized" in front of Japanese friends, particularly at the secondary level. Some students, then, tend to narrow their range of acquaintances as well as experiences in order to protect their image, even before they return to Japan.

4) JAPANESE CHILDREN WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES AND SPECIAL NEEDS IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

There are considerable cultural differences in the way Japanese parents and American educators define psychological problems and learning disabilities. Two major factors are frequently cited to explain this disparity. Generally the Japanese educational system, particularly at the earlier levels, subscribes to a far more limited definition of learning

differences and special needs. Japanese frequently view U.S. special education programs as a dumping ground for behavioral problems that could easily be worked out in the mainstream classroom. Also Japanese classroom management techniques handle the individual child who acts up in class very differently. Except in extraordinary situations, Japanese teachers encourage the group to gradually socialize the errant student rather than exercise teacher authority by insisting on a standard of performance.

This is a source of frustration to both teachers and administrators. One Westchester district sought to address this issue in culturally appropriate and sensitive ways. In this district, teachers had discovered that if they phrased a request for parental intervention or permission for calling in a remedial specialist in terms of "helping the teacher to do his or her job better," the Japanese parent was very supportive. However, when the same action was suggested in terms that specifically evaluated the child as having special needs or problems, the Japanese parent tended to be resistant, frequently citing cultural differences regarding acceptable or aberrant behavior.

This contrast raises an important cultural issue, that of parental attitudes toward and respect for teachers in Japan, and the implications for the parent-teacher relationship. In Japan teaching is a well-regarded and highly paid profession, on a par with doctors, lawyers, accountants, and other highly trained and educated professionals. Teachers are accorded a great deal of respect by parents and students alike, and a Japanese parent might be expected to be far more receptive to suggestions that encourage his or her assistance in the execution of the teacher's professional obligations to the class as a group, as opposed to the needs of an individual child.

IV. THE CHALLENGE OF RETURNING HOME FOR THE JAPANESE CHILD

Assessing the impact on Japanese students of their experience in the United States is difficult. Today, at least officially, Japanese children returning from abroad are generally not considered to have been "infected with foreignness" (an expression that was popular at one time). Currently the Japanese government espouses the promotion of *kokusaika* (internationalization), and any overseas experience is seen as enhancing this larger societal goal.

Beyond public policy and pronouncements, however, often the painful reality for Japanese children and parents is that they are returning to a culture that values homogeneity. Current research suggests that returning Japanese students still often face a lonely existence until they shed most of their foreign ways and "fit in." To a large extent their English language skills are not favorably regarded by their English language teachers, many of whom never have had the benefit of overseas travel and protracted interaction with native English speakers. Further, social interaction with peers is often difficult since "returnees" tend to speak, dress, and behave differently. Again, there is peer pressure not to be "too Americanized."

If the proliferation of Japanese day schools in the United States continues, fewer of the Japanese students who come to this country will have an "American experience" in the sense of attending public school and interacting with Americans on a daily basis. While these Japanese schools are perhaps instrumental in helping Japanese students progress with their peers back home, this development may mean that many students will have a "transplanted Japanese" experience rather than an "in country" American experience. The difference is not a subtle one. Japanese parents must balance various considerations in deciding how their children are to be educated in two different cultures.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS

The classroom is primarily a place of learning, of gaining a better understanding of society and the larger world. A true appreciation and understanding of another culture cannot come from books and classroom study alone. A large number of Japanese children are coming into American classrooms where they are learning English and succeeding in their studies in all subjects. Beyond that achievement, the question remains, in what ways has the cross-cultural experience been a success and how can it be enhanced? The following recommendations and considerations are offered in the hope that they will enhance the intercultural contact between Japanese and U.S. nationals.

FOR TEACHERS:

* In many cases teachers are reaping great benefits from their experience with Japanese nationals. Several school systems have created extensive in-service programs for ESL, language, and social studies teachers and the school community at large. These programs and courses, frequently offered in conjunction with various university-level Japanese studies programs and resource centers, have greatly enhanced teacher knowledge of Japanese culture. Such programs should be continued and expanded.

* The presence of Japanese students in their classrooms has prompted many teachers to reevaluate commonly held assumptions about classroom management and the socialization of children and to broaden the range of standards in positive ways.

* By having Japanese children in their classrooms, many American teachers have become familiar with differences in educational theory and practice between the United States and Japan. These teachers and their classrooms provide excellent laboratories for comparative educational research. Graduate schools of education throughout the country proposing such research should take advantage of the resources in these classrooms and school districts.

WITHIN THE DISTRICT:

* Any district receiving Japanese students should create Japanese language orientation materials and handbooks for newly arrived students and their families explaining the American school system. These should address such issues as the school schedule, the emphasis placed on homework, grading and evaluation systems, and the range of extra-curricular options.

* Districts should encourage corporations to take into account the U.S. school calendar and transfer their employees with families during the summer so the children can enter school at the beginning of the academic year.

* Some districts have applied the Japanese model of classroom management, either within a single classroom or throughout the school. This often involves giving the children responsibility for cleaning the room, halls, and schoolyard. By keeping classes together year after year, having students eat together in the classroom, and developing frameworks for consensual decision-making and group-oriented discipline, the Japanese model seeks to promote a greater sense of class solidarity.

* Conspicuous by its general absence in districts with large populations of Japanese students in the tri-state area was the offering of Japanese language courses to the American student population. One district offered Japanese at three levels in the high school, but this was supported by a Japanese organization. Some districts that considered offering Japanese encountered opposition from teachers of other languages who feared the addition of another language course would result in decreased enrollment for their own classes.

* Travel programs to Japan for U.S. students and teachers are also notably few in the tri-state area, although opportunities for organizing and funding these trips through local efforts and contributions clearly exist; fuller advantage should be taken of these opportunities.

AT THE ELEMENTARY LEVEL:

* Considerable effort has been made to introduce Japanese components into the elementary curriculum. This has often provided an excellent opportunity for involving Japanese mothers in the teaching of origami, crafts, or other Japanese children's games. The further involvement of Japanese mothers should be pursued.

* Greater effort should be made at the elementary level to encourage out-of-school contacts among students and their families by suggesting play-dates and other informal get-togethers.

* Consonant with the U.S. educational view that school is the "great leveler," many schools have devised a number of activities to promote greater socialization among all students. Most schools have some type of international club, offering foreign

nationals, including Japanese, an opportunity to be leaders, to demonstrate their expertise in a particular area, and to teach their fellow students some aspect of their culture. Admittedly, these kinds of activities have mixed results; several of these efforts at the elementary and middle school level seemed quite successful while similar programs at the high school level were often been deemed superficial.

AT THE SECONDARY LEVEL:

* Much more can and needs to be done in social studies, literature, and in the teaching of the Japanese language at the secondary level to bring Japan into the classroom. More should be done to involve the Japanese students as cultural informants and peer teachers.

* Since many Japanese high school students are newcomers, more needs to be done to create means to better initiate them into the American high school social scene.

WITHIN THE JAPANESE COMMUNITY:

* The recent tendency of Japanese companies to promote the greater participation of Japanese fathers in school and community activities is most encouraging. Yet there is also a need to find ways to better involve mothers with limited English language skills in school and community life.

* Companies should attempt to transfer employees with families on schedules more compatible with the American school system so that children arrive during the summer rather than at the end of the academic year. It is very difficult to initiate new programs in the spring, and much of what incoming children may learn in the final weeks of the school year is forgotten over the long summer vacation.

* Greater effort needs to be made to involve families and the Japanese corporate community in local school and community activities to better promote understanding, communication, and friendship.

WITHIN THE AMERICAN COMMUNITY:

* Similarly, much more needs to be done within the American host communities to welcome Japanese families, to invite them into the home, and to build friendships among adults and children that might endure after the family has returned to Japan.

* Again, travel to Japan by Americans, particularly those from communities with large Japanese populations should be promoted. Japanese governmental and private institutions are possible sources of funding for people-to-people exchanges. Travel also offers the potential for meeting families that have returned to Japan, providing

them an opportunity to reciprocate the hospitality they may have received in their American host community.

By and large the districts visited, and the teachers within them, are vigorously addressing the pedagogical issues presented by the influx of Japanese children. What is needed now is greater attention to enhancing the socialization aspects of that experience, not only for Japanese children and their families, but also for the American children, educators, and citizens with whom they come into contact during their several year sojourn in the United States. The presence of Japanese nationals in U.S. communities offers a valuable opportunity for promoting better understanding between the two nations and for fostering international awareness among children on both sides of the Pacific.